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The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.

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Honor the Flag



Suffer not your anger to rise, lest you heap
indignity upon an innocent child.

That would dishonor the flag.

Beware lest you show favoritism and discourage
those who do not reach your affection.

That would dishonor the flag.

Let not the methods of Russian autocracy gain
a foot-hold in an American class-room.

That would dishonor the flag.

Put not your trust in the politician, or politics
may destroy the professional spirit

That would dishonor the flag

Yield not to the arrogance of wealth and power
when it seeks to dominate your work.

That would dishonor the flag.

Sell not your freedom for a smile or a job.

That would dishonor the flag.

THE ETHICS OF WRONGDOING

SAM SCHMALHAUSEN
De Witt Clinton High School

ALL OUR ASPIRATIONS and desperate gropings are rooted deeply in the human need for power—for power over nature, for power over man. Customary morality is, in fact, the result of the desire for power over one's neighbor. To me all systems of morality are deeply immoral, because they intensify the egotism and vanity of the self-appointed few who feel it their sacred duty to stand aloof as judges of their bungling fellow men. A deep allegiance to any kind of custom morality corrupts the mind, making one either a charlatan or a persecutor.

When you recall the simple fact that etymologically, morality comes from a word meaning custom, and that the so-called moral person is often a blind, or a cowardly, follower of custom, of tradition, or of habit, then the admiration we all frequently share for the "moral" person is seen to be an evidence of ignorance or spiritual flabbiness. Let me ask this: Is the mere routine imitation of a social practise *sufficient* guarantee of the existence of an intelligent moral sense? Does the commonplace fact that Jones lacks the courage to be unlike his ancestors entitle him to our eulogy and ethical respect? I myself cannot see why. If our morality is built upon the animal fact of imitation, it belongs in the same psychological category as all other imitative acts: namely, the category of mental laziness or slavishness. A man may read the Bible daily and yet be a reprobate. Earthly saints are often sinners, intellectually and morally exhausted. This world does not at present need more so-called moral persons; we already have more than we can tolerate of that species. But the world is terribly in need of more thinkers, more critical minds, more skeptics and doubters. People who do what is right by imitation and because of fear are not truly moral, but are sheeplike and instinct-driven.

I desire to offer for the consideration of teachers a theory of workaday moral-

ity, which should be of use to those whose minds have not been hopelessly enslaved by our customary hard-as-nails ethics. I shall call it: The Depreciation Fund Theory of Morals. We are all familiar with the business practise of laying aside a calculated sum of money against the day when machinery, having been worn out in service, shall be automatically replaced. Business men know that accidents occur to machinery; they know that it wears out. They also know that the daily assault of the atmosphere, of friction, of usage, makes for a moral decline, so to speak, of the machine. It cannot, no matter how polished, how veneered, how apparently perfect, continue in the path of mechanical rectitude. The days of reckoning must arrive. So they do. Instead of sitting down, like that foolish, though of course virtuous, Penelope, to weep at the unkindness of Fate, our hardheaded business men meet the moral deterioration of the machine very sanely; they anticipate its decline; therefore, the fund for depreciation is all ready to hand. This theory applied to human conduct is more than an analogy:—more than a figure of speech. It is a human, livable method for understanding, and therefore, for being prepared to meet, those disturbing irregularities of conduct which we call wrongdoing.

To illustrate the way this idea works out in practise, let us take a familiar instance. An informal gathering of young teachers is held. Each one is in a reminiscent mood. All are good-natured, jovial, uncritical. The Salvation-Army spirit pervades the meeting. Now please notice what happens, morally. I shall analyze very briefly the ethic of reminiscence. Mr. A. is called upon and smiling sweetly tells about his glorious college days and his beloved Alma Mater. He tells how he faked one "cinch" course; how he fooled a certain professor; how without being caught he

constantly used a pony; how he used to copy all his homework in math. because he hated the subject, etc., etc. His comrades-in-delight laugh good humoredly and applaud his cleverness. No one is honestly shocked. At this very juncture, I want you to observe a curious trait in human nature. Wrongdoing viewed in perspective, through the prism of subdued colors and soft-toned lights, is no longer wrongdoing. It is simply an excusable, forgivable mistake; a mere foolish error or prank. In short, we forgive our ancestors, but we hound our own brethren. How irrational! That same person, be he teacher or someone more subtle, who nonchalantly recites his sins of yesteryear without a blush will persecute his pupil or subordinate for a similar offense committed under his mentorship, because, strange to say, the sin should have been committed years ago! Crime, reminiscently viewed, is no longer crime; it is mere folly. Conclusion: Let the offender who perpetrates a wrong at twelve o'clock set the alarm for seven; by noon he will have been forgiven. He will thus save himself much humiliation and punishment.

Man in general, and teachers in particular, are in danger of being persecutors by profession. They will hound a wrongdoer when he is caught (this superiority is the normal joy of all moral folk), but will drink to good fellowship with him, if having escaped public detection, he reminisces boastfully about his remarkable shrewdness. Is man a rational creature?

Now, how about our pupils and their welfare? Assuming that we are fit guardians of the morals of our charges, what shall be our attitude? I shall take the liberty to tell you of a personal experience. Not long ago, I assigned a magazine article on "Theories of Sleep" to a sixth-term high school class. Several days later, I received a letter from an official of the New York Public Library in which he stated that a student of mine had been guilty of tearing out several pages from a magazine. The student's identity was not known. Would I kindly ferret out and hand over the culprit,

who was liable to punishment for a misdemeanor?

In my own modest way I wrote the well-meaning gentleman that the offense was indeed serious, but that our wonderful American prisons were no place for the inculcation of a system of morals, or even for teaching, simple pro-social conduct. The boy's character-development was dear to me, and I knew that our high school was indeed a better place for the correction of anti-social tendencies than a degrading prison would be. I promised to investigate and report my findings to the librarian. I did. All students living near the desecrated library were duly assembled. Without any pose of superior virtue or of holy indignation on my part, but in a natural, conversational way, we all discussed the situation; the causes of such wrong conduct, its unfairness to other readers, its selfishness, etc. I did not seek for, nor did I find, a criminal; for indeed there was none. I refused, as a matter of human decency, to brand any boy as a wrongdoer in the presence of his self-important, self-righteous comrades, because of one thoughtless act. The librarian was content with my personal charge of the case, and simply dropped it. The important point is this: Before any man, no matter how immaculately virtuous, dares to damage another person's future career, let him find out sympathetically, as though he were dealing with his own flesh and blood, the motives behind the act, and more important still, the offender's personal and environmental history.

Fortunately, it is impossible for most of us to be as harsh with a person after an intimate acquaintance with him as one is who habitually regards a wrongdoer merely as a machine, a guilty thing apart. Suppose your dearest friend (not meaning yourself) were caught cheating, swindling or lying. Would you gladly, because of your fanatical love of truth for truth's sake, bear witness against him? Or would you rather strain every nerve of your imagination to prove that he was human and worthy, his detected guilt notwithstanding? Can

we not afford to be as sane and generous with the other woman's child as we are with our own intimates. Verily, censors of morals are the greatest tyrants on earth. This world needs *humane* men and women, not cold-blooded, finger-pointing priests and infallible popes. Hester Prynne was more spiritual far, and more profoundly moral, than the cheap hypocrites who lightheartedly ostracised her.

Pray, let me know, why are we so flustered over the fact that a few of our boys are caught stealing lunch checks, and that many others are caught lying now and then? Does anyone seriously believe that these offenses are important in a school where ninety per cent. of the students never steal with *malice prepense* nor lie because they have *premeditated* wrongdoing? Where the motive is not vicious, there the act is not serious. To forgive and forget is the only common-sense policy. *Mere detection is sufficient pain and punishment for most human beings.* Why persecute growing children, who will suffer sufficiently, as things are, in the brutish scramble for pelf and power characteristic of present-day society. Many of them undoubtedly already suffer far too much in homes made unsweet by discord, poverty and ignorance. We must be kind and lenient, not because we are sentimentalists, but just because we *are* hardheaded business people with a large depreciation fund stored away as human nature's necessary allowance. We must be kind and lenient not in order to save the wrongdoer from the consequences of his offense, but primarily to save ourselves from those twin corruptions that lie eternally awake in the human breast; self-righteousness and persecution. We must be extremely humane to the other fellow in our power, in order to keep our own souls from ossifying. Let us beware of being too moral; we may become dehumanized.

You ask, "Is not morality a serious business for us teachers, then?" Yes, very serious. But what kind of morality? I venture to suggest that there are only two serious moral problems on God's earth at present. The *first*, is the

living need for us teachers to take the laborer's side in the great class struggle now hotly waging in the whole civilized world, so that the hard workers shall get their just human dues; namely: the means of living comfortably, even as their exploiters do. There is immediate need of our adding our collective school strength to the problem of freeing all the children of the poor from the grinding profit system which encourages a parasitic upper class in battenning upon the wealth legally filched from hard-working men, women and children. The *second*, is that we take the human side in the great movement for woman's emancipation from the humiliating bondage of dependence upon man; dependence in matters economic, political and educational. Every step the women of the world are taking to fight off the galling slavery of a bad, man-made society is a sign of moral heroism and bespeaks a great spiritual revolution in the near future.

Any teacher whose mind is on fire because of these irrepressible conflicts, these shameful exploitations of the powerless, is on the highway toward the only Morality worth talking or fighting about; the Morality which says to you as it said to Ruskin, to Carlyle, to William Morris, to Tolstoi, to Bebel, to Jaures, to Shaw and to a host of other splendid libertarians: Take your place in the social conflict. Help to remove the profit-grinders from the backs of the workers. Strike an educational blow in behalf of the toiling millions. As teachers, you can fight to socialize the curriculum, *to teach the conditions of life as they actually are in factory and mine, in shop and mill.* The pupils will then learn that their greatest moral need is to practise the ethics of solidarity, of standing together against the food-adulterators, against department-store schemers, against all the profit grinders, against the manifold exploitations which thrive on the enforced wage-slavery of the toiling masses.

I have abundant faith in our power as teachers to eliminate the petty cases of anti-social conduct flourishing in our

midst, provided only that we make our students our comrades, our co-workers. Those who laugh at this plan are the very ones who advocate the mediaeval ethics of persecution, of getting "even," of "Do as I Tell You"; in short, the ethics of vindictiveness. When our pupils shall have become class-conscious, social-minded citizens, all the problems of morality, now so conflicting, will be in the course of solution. When the boys or girls under our care get to feel that we are honestly their friends, their comrades, interested in the problems that agitate their fathers, their mothers and themselves, social solidarity will become the best guaranty of right social conduct.

It is we teachers who are sorely in need of a larger, working-class ethics, a social philosophy that will set our minds aflame with the desire to fight with our proletarian pupils against the cunning exploiters in "society." It is we teachers who are in dire need of a new social outlook; our students will learn their morality from us, you may depend upon it.

I am tired of listening to our trivial

indictments against human beings who work hard. What do you expect of men, women and children, overtaxed, hard-driven, excited, weighted down by domestic perplexities, afraid of this, afraid of that, eternally worried, worried, worried? What do we want of them? Must they be consigned for every fresh wrongdoing to the doubtful felicity of fire and brimstone? Yes, if you believe in the ethics of persecution. No, if you have faith in the depreciation fund theory of morals.

The most conspicuous fact on earth is pain, and to knowingly intensify, by public humiliation and punishment, the suffering of a guilty comrade, man or woman, boy or girl, is criminal, simply criminal.

Do not expect too much and you will be disappointed less frequently. This world is deeply rooted in imperfections. Why not be as tolerant with others who do wrong as you are with yourself? It would do us all infinite spiritual good. Let's reminisce just a wee bit more. We shall be able to judge more wisely.

THE EFFECT OF PRIVATE HOUSEKEEPING UPON PUBLIC EDUCATORS

HENRY R. LINVILLE

THERE IS NO public spirit that urges a man to interfere when a neighbor is beating his wife. If one is much disturbed by the commotion, he may notify the police, but the police know that the longest life goes to him who sees the least trouble. Anyway, whipping is a private matter, and for all an outsider can tell it may be abundantly justified. Besides, anyone can understand that in the close association of human beings friction is sure to develop. We believe that no amount of generous intentions, and no amount of anything less than superhuman self-control can prevent "trouble" in families, and in schools as well.

Nevertheless, society, or at least a con-

siderable portion of it, has been giving attention to some matters that may improve the conditions in families, relieving the psychologic and economic strain that has fallen unfairly to the lot of most men and women. In the same public spirit, educational experts and others representing those who hope for something to come out of our elaborate planning in education should be up and at the task of "cleaning house," discharging those housekeepers who think they own the house, and establishing standards for the better performance of work by the new housekeepers.

All the workers in an educational system from the President of the Board of Education down to the newest substitute

teacher may agree on policies of training the children for citizenship, on vocational guidance, on eliminating useless studies, on moral education, and on other valuable contributions that have been made to our ideas of the right kind of education. And for all that, they may maintain, sometimes honestly and sometimes dishonestly, a policy of school housekeeping that amounts to a civic disgrace. I find many persons unwilling to give serious consideration to the intimate affairs of individual schools, because of an apparent assumption that a school is like a family.

In spite of the large amount of good work done by the School Inquiry Committee that has recently published its report of findings in the study of the New York educational system, there is no evidence that the Committee realized the importance of the matter alluded to in this article. When inhuman, or high-handed, or prejudiced, or indifferent, or ignorant management of schools in New York City is probably the rule rather than the exception, it can fairly be said that the housekeeping of schools is a real problem. The condition of affairs can also be said to have passed the point where abstention from the discussion of the question is a mark of wise and tactful caution. It is not impossible that the time may soon come when the silence of those who know the facts may be interpreted either as an evidence of cowardice, or of collusion.

At the same time, discussion of bad management in the schools must be supported eventually by evidence that will stand the test of investigation. This evidence cannot be produced by any one individual, and might not be discovered in its entirety by a Commission, because of the proverbial timidity of the teachers—the only persons who really know the facts. But there are many lines of grapevine telegraph running from teacher to teacher, between one school and another. Over these lines we get much information, some probably very inaccurate and some very true—information which in the course of years, by a careful process

of checking up, tends to establish in the mind of a close observer the basis for a common-sense estimate of a school's standing.

It is probably beyond the ability of any one person to give a satisfactory estimate of the character of the management of the five hundred elementary schools in New York City. But it is not impossible to do it for the twenty-six high schools and training schools for teachers. For the purpose of using it as a basis for this article, I have made a list of these twenty-six schools, and have briefly characterized each one in terms which I believe to be accurately descriptive of them. In this matter I have endeavored to be as fair as honest-minded men try to be who publicly make estimates of the character of their fellows.

I believe that not one of the training schools for teachers is doing work that promises well for the future of teaching in this city. Autocracy, sometimes benevolent and sometimes otherwise, pervades their management, while their educational banners, if they have them, are colorless. Formalism, hopelessness, and death are in the air, and in the substance upon which the minds of the students feed.

Three of the high schools are either new or under new management—the Curtis, the Julia Richman, and the Evander Childs. It is of course unfair to estimate them until they have had adequate opportunity to show the stuff they are made of.

There are no more than three high schools in the city which seem to me to have clear conceptions of their function in the community, and to be able to work them out with the approximately satisfactory coöperation of their bodies of teachers. They are the DeWitt Clinton High School, the Erasmus Hall High School, and the Morris High School. The last, however, is in the thrall of a benevolent feudalism, which will surely destroy its prestige when social ideals in education are more generally accepted. My inclination is strong toward placing one other high school in the small group

of satisfactory high schools, because of the public stand the principal has taken in favor of democracy in education, and because of his holding to the social ideal of making the school an efficient means of interpreting life to the children. But, to adapt a phrase invented by a clever professor of English at Yale, I fear this school "does not come up to its brag."

There are five high schools which I should classify as colorless and lacking in constructive force. So far as I can make out, their principals are mechanically efficient, and are considerate of teachers and pupils. But I think I am just in saying that their reputations do not contain satisfactory indication of a comprehension of the ideal purposefulness of education; and they show slight apparent ability to bring their schools into line with any coherent set of ideals.

The other eleven high schools of New York City are markedly defective in one way or another, and in my judgment are not in a position at present to claim equality even with average metropolitan high schools. Most of the principals of the schools in this category are apparently lukewarm in their sympathy with modern movements in education. They are often out of sympathy with the teachers of the school, and in some cases, with the pupils themselves. In some of the schools the result is disorganization, and in others, sullen submission to force. The same conditions probably exist in many elementary schools.

I believe I am making a faithful statement of a fact when I say that not one of these eleven schools stands out as a strong social or civic factor in its community, altho some of them have attained high standing in the formal requirements of scholarship. All of them are wasting golden opportunities by holding to their narrow ideals of scholarship, to the "discipline" of the teachers, and to the machinery that helps them maintain their power over the teachers—and helps them show that they are doing it.

Under the current system of education in New York it is natural and fair to hold the principals responsible for the standing and the character of the schools.

The by-laws of the Department do not provide for the teachers sharing in the management of the schools, or for their having any authoritative part in determining policies. Thus, when a principal misinterprets his relation to the community, or does not see it at all, the community practically loses its natural contact with the school thru the interference of a solitary individual. This of course constitutes a socially criminal waste to the public.

I realize that at the present time comparatively few teachers desire to share in the responsibilities of their schools, and be held accountable to the community for the administration of a school. But those who are thinking in the interest of the community may not be constrained to consider first the feeling of the teachers in the matter. The first consideration should be the usefulness of the public's educational property for social advancement. A one-man system is known to endanger that usefulness, while the many-men system, thru its natural co-existent ideal of coöperation, gives the community its opportunity to share in the benefits of its own institution. It would be almost impossible for a body of teachers to isolate the school from the sympathies and the social interests of a community as completely as is sometimes done by individual principals. It is not inconceivable, then, that the community itself may in some quarter initiate a demand that democratic control of the schools be adopted as a policy.

In some form a shock or surprise must come to our high school teachers. They are too content with inertness for the community's good, for their own good, and for the good of the children. Many of the teachers have become so benumbed by the oppression of their environment that they no longer react to official insolence. They appear to believe that the insolence is a necessary feature of a well-organized school. I have found teachers who even strongly resented any adverse criticism of their oppressor. Great is the pity that doormats cannot be martyrs!

We should not leave out of account the evident fact that we would have bet-

ter principals, if they were *compelled* to be better. There is nothing like man-to-man criticism for making us toe the social and moral mark. Neither is there anything like autocratic power over de-

fenseless men and women for turning a decent fellow into a petty tyrant.

We cannot afford to permit public educators to engage in private housekeeping.

FACTS NEEDED FOR ADJUSTING THE LENGTH OF THE COURSE OF STUDY

FRANK P. BACHMAN, PH.D.

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THE ELEMENTARY school course of study is, in theory, as a rule, eight years in length; what its actual total length is has seldom been taken into account. The course is prescribed and pupils wishing to complete it must remain in school until its requirements are met, whether this takes eight years or nine years or ten years and more. The course of study could easily be made so long that to complete it would hold pupils in the elementary school until they were twenty-one and older. But it is obviously unwise educationally to make the elementary course of study longer by one, two or three years than the length of time the rank and file of children may be expected to be in attendance—between six and fourteen or fifteen—because by such procedure only a small proportion of the children who enter the elementary school will continue in school until they complete the course. If, however, all normal children in regular attendance are to be able to finish an elementary school course of study by fourteen or fifteen it should be evident that the actual length of the course of study offered must approximate closely the time children may with profit be held under the régime of the elementary school. Hence, instead of the length of the course of study determining the time children must remain in the elementary school as is now the case, it is the time children may reasonably be expected to be in school between six and fourteen or fifteen that must determine the actual length of the course of study pursued. The present elementary course of study with slight modifications has been operative in the elementary schools of the City of New

York since 1905. Yet no one knows with exactness how long it is. The actual length of this course can only be determined as data are collected year by year with reference to the length of time taken by normal pupils completing a given grade to do the work of that grade, and as these data are used to measure the actual length of each grade and of the entire course. Until this is done no one will know whether the present course of study is eight, nine, ten or more years in length. Yet this course of unknown length is set up to be completed by children who wish to graduate from the elementary schools of the city.

Likewise, no data have been collected on how long children are actually in attendance between six and fourteen or fifteen. The only way to determine this is to collect data year by year, on the length of time children entering have been in attendance in the elementary schools of other places and of the city. Until such data are collected no one will know definitely how long children are actually in the elementary schools of the city, or how long they are in school between six and fourteen or fifteen. Consequently, it is impossible to determine what the actual total length of the course of study should be.

It therefore appears that two sets of data fundamental to the proper adjustment and administration of a course of study in the City of New York are wholly lacking: (a) data on the actual total length of the present course of study, and (b) data on the actual length of time children are in attendance between six and fourteen or fifteen.

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*This paper seeks to advance the status
of the teacher to the dignity and the influence
of a profession, by advocating
high standards of admission to the calling;
by urging an extension of the opportunities
for the participation of teachers
in the direction of educational affairs;
and by supporting the organization of
teachers for all legitimate professional
purposes.*

**THE AMERICAN TEACHER
COMPANY, Inc.**

THE AMERICAN TEACHER is now under the management of a stock company incorporated according to the laws of the State of New York. This step marks the end of the long, hard pull made by the original editors and managers, and the beginning of the endeavor

of a much larger number of teachers to cooperate in the publication of their militant organ.

In harmony with the purpose of the paper, the Company will conduct its business for the sake of educational ideals, and not for the sake of business. It can be taken for granted that every teacher who has invested some of his hard-earned money in the fortunes of the only aggressive teacher's periodical in this country is enthusiastic enough for the cause which the paper has been upholding for two and one-half years, to be prepared to lose his investment, if further experience shows that teachers do not want an aggressive periodical. However, the very fact that the managers of the paper experienced no difficulty whatever in securing the written promises of teachers to take over two-fifths of the shares on sale, making it possible to pay debts and to have a comfortable balance, gives sufficient guarantee that teachers do want the paper, and are willing to make sacrifices for it.

As evidence of a feeling of thankfulness for the confidence implied in the ready support, the original editors dedicate themselves anew to the inspiring work of rendering effective the shots that experience and hopefulness give us all. With the aid of the new associate editors who are soon to be elected, the burden of work will be lightened, and the influence of the paper extended.

But it is not the editors alone who will give the paper its hold upon the imagination of fellow-teachers. The shareholders should, and in most cases doubtless will, constitute themselves members of a large informal working committee to advocate the earnest moral support, and the adequate financial support, of their organ. The purchasing of shares in a periodical of this kind naturally leads to some other act that proves still more fully the existence of the spirit of cooperation in the purchaser. Already many of the new supporters have become active in sending in new subscriptions. It is really very easy to obtain subscriptions for the paper, at least in your own school. Try it, and you will

be surprised to see how effective are your enthusiasm and a good cause well presented.

For the information of those of our readers who have not learned of the project to form The American Teacher Company, it may be stated that the capital stock of the Company is \$2,500.00. Of the five hundred shares, forty-nine per cent. of which were put on sale, over one hundred have been sold at the par value of \$5.00 per share. There are still about one hundred forty shares unsold. The sale of these is in the charge of the Treasurer of the Company. Application may be made to her at the office of publication. Subscriptions to stock have varied from one to five shares. Further coöperation is urged upon all teachers who believe the cause of The American Teacher should live and flourish.

AS TO QUALIFICATIONS

FOR OVER two years THE AMERICAN TEACHER has been calling attention to the fact that the Department of Education of New York City has never determined upon any qualifications beyond purely formal, scholastic ones for the position of principal of a high school. In spite of the claim that we have no "politics" in the New York educational system, everyone deeply concerned has been aware of the existence of at least one other qualification—that of knowing politicians, and knowing them well.

If, however, one is not acquainted with a politician—not even a Tammany politician—but has a friend who has a cousin who is a politician—even a Tammany politician—that will serve very well. The Tammany politician will "go in and work," and endeavor to "deliver the goods," without even knowing the candidate, and without expecting any thanks, provided only he is assured that this request for help is based on some deep, personal obligation, or on a liking of the politician's relative for the candidate. This is not an insinuation, but is a true description of a real condition.

But now, the Board of Education is beginning an inquiry as to the qualifications that the principal of a training school should possess. This will lead to an inquiry as to the qualifications that the principal of a high school, or a superintendent, should have. The Board is to be congratulated on taking, albeit tardily, this high civic stand. The files of THE AMERICAN TEACHER will give the Board some valuable suggestions on specific qualifications. An inquiry sent to the teachers ought to yield many more suggestions.

The test of the worth of the resolution to institute the inquiry will come when the nominations to current vacancies in the positions of principal and superintendent are made. To a limited extent, the eyes of the public are upon the Board. Let the teachers consider themselves the well-informed part of the public. Let them awaken to the realization of the good influence that their public interest in the matter might create. Many years of suffering from bad appointments of superior officers should be stimulus enough.

INSIGHT AND FORESIGHT

TO INCREASE its usefulness and efficiency, Bowdoin College has adopted the preceptorial method of instruction, which was inaugurated at Princeton University by President Wilson about ten years ago. This system requires men of high ability, sound training and culture. Such men cannot be obtained without paying them good salaries.

For some time the policy of Bowdoin has been to select its instructors and professors from among the best-trained and most promising young men of the country, to pay them high salaries, and to promote them rapidly even at the risk of having them called away early. Now it proposes to set aside \$600,000 for increasing salaries, so that it may retain permanently the services of these young men.

What is your city doing to "retain permanently" its teachers of high character, training, and ability?

THE DOUBLE SESSION ECONOMY

LONG BEFORE the agitation for greater efficiency in institutions of all kinds came about there were "part-time" or "double-sessions" plans in schools. But the plans were not carried out as experiments, but as make-shifts worried thru under the stress of circumstances. No one seems ever to have thought of those old-time trials to accommodate all the children as experiments in economy. And everybody was glad when the opening of a new building, or even the acquirement of a condemned old building, made it possible to abandon an intolerable situation.

The glamor of the new industrial philosophy of efficiency has made us almost forget the sad experiences of early days. And now, some are proclaiming the double session as the appropriate and adequate means for using the expensive school plants to their fullest capacity.

We have no fault to find with the idea of efficiency, and we have no desire to limit the usefulness of property belonging to the public. But we are very sure that the highest efficiency and the greatest usefulness that can result from maintaining a school in a fifty-thousand-dollar building, or in a million-dollar building, will come from maintaining the school with *all* its powers, not some of them, centered upon its problems.

The school in the exercise of all its powers carries its work much beyond the hour of 2:30 or 3:00. There are athletics, dramatics, music, debating, sketch clubs, language clubs, science clubs, school paper staffs, and other interests either developing from the work of the school, or reflecting life outside the school. All of these interests bring to the pupils the stimulus of a fuller life. For their adequate performance they need from a half-hour to one and one-half hours after the close of school. They draw a large proportion of all the pupils at one time or another, and they require the devoted attention of the finest spirits among the teachers of the schools. In fact, a teacher who is not qualified to take up one or another in-

terest after the recitations of the day are over has a correspondingly lower value as a teacher, and is a negligible factor in the social power of the school.

In another and not less vital way the school continues after the closing hour. The backward pupils cannot keep up with any pace but one that would be too slow for pupils of average mental endowment. Not only is it well for the school to put forth extra efforts thru its teachers for these less fortunate ones, but the strong pressure brought to bear upon the schools by the administration to promote higher and higher proportions of pupils makes additional teaching an apparently unavoidable necessity.

Conducting a school on a complete double session plan means the entire elimination of extra-school interests and attention to backward pupils. The advocates of the double session plan do not seem to be facing this issue. They are not facing it, because they cannot.

Another aspect of the problem deserves more consideration than it has hitherto received. That is the physiological factor of fatigue. While the efficiency experts in whose steps the educational managers are trying to follow have discovered that it is no true economy to arrange schedules that call for continuous exertion, those responsible for the administration of the schools seek to increase "efficiency" by closing their eyes to the fact that one hour in the day is *not* exactly like every other hour. Grown-ups realize that they can do things in the morning that they cannot do in the afternoon; but many do not hesitate to send children to a day's schooling regardless of the hours in which the schooling is to fall. It is a manifestation of the mechanical and formal workings of the human mind: pigs is pigs, dollars is dollars, children is children, hours is hours, business is business.

If we recognize that there are children *and* children, that there are hours *and* hours, as well as teachers *and* teachers, we may have to admit that an emergency may call for double sessions or triple sessions—but we shall have to insist that

such schedules do not meet the needs of the children, or of the community, that they do not solve the problem either from an administrative or from an educational point of view. We shall raise our voices against such plans as false in principle, pernicious in practise and economically untenable.

SIDETALKS WITH SUPERINTENDENTS. V.

J. S.

A SHORT TIME ago one of your peers told me that he thot that one of the important sources of evil in the New York educational system was the prevalence of narrow-minded, petty, truculent and inhuman principals. And he didn't look behind him either when he said it, and I was so interested that I forgot to look behind. Still, this type of principal is so common and so much in the saddle that it pays to be circumspect when we speak of him.

Most of us live in such dependent relations with our principals that it seldom happens that we are really free to think, much less to express our thots of them. This condition is bad for us, and it is bad for the principals; it unquestionably helps to make bad principals.

I have found it a very good intellectual exercise outside of school hours to think and talk of the principals I have met and have had dealings with, as if their relations to me were merely human ones. I recommend the practise of thus considering these officers to every teacher who can undertake it with calmness and discrimination. There is nothing like it for developing skill and power in measuring the acts of small-calibre principals by the normal standards of human beings of character.

This is not suggested as a device for retaliating against those administrative officers who talk much of the laziness, stupidity and general inefficiency of teachers. It is offered as a natural means for the development of standards to be applied without fear or favor. And those who help in the development of standards cannot logically object to the application

of those standards to their own cases.

Difficult as even the strongest of our fellow teachers must find it to deal with principals along the line of human obligations, I am persuaded that there will never be permanent gain in our effectiveness in developing character in boys and girls until we eliminate official bossism, and worse, in the principals. The machinery of educational systems grows more and more perfect in its arrangements, but the strain becomes greater and greater on everyone, because of the increased determination of officers to force matters in the directions of their choice. There is no general and permanent improvement in the relations of principal and teachers. Inefficient teaching is matched by petty and insolent supervision, and so it will be till the crash comes, unless the profession sees the light.

Even tho a peer of superintendents has called my attention to what I already knew, I do not expect him or them, which means you, gentlemen, to be of vital service in doing away with the evil of truculent and inhuman principals. An attack made on a bad principal is interpreted, correctly, as an attack on your system, for you appointed the principal. An acknowledgement of a mistake on your part would be a confession of weakness, therefore you defend your official against the accusations of anyone. This is exactly what a political ring does, although there is supposed to be no politics in the best school systems.

Far off as the possibility of success may seem even to the most optimistic of teachers, the teachers themselves must unite on some common understanding of what they believe should be demanded of principals and other supervisory and administrative officers. There is small hope in other quarters. Boards of education are uninformed, and are obsessed with an exaggerated feeling of their own importance; superintendents as a class are occupied with the burden of holding their jobs against the insistence of new ideas clamoring at the barred gates of the citadel; and the good principals are timid—and want to be superintendents.

Where shall we begin? Well, this new idea of the school council seems to have in it some elements of strength and effectiveness. It means organization for considering the problems of the school. It means coöperation for the development of professional spirit among the teachers. It means light thrown into the dark corners where medieval methods prevail in our teaching. And, I may as well be fair to our enemies, it means death to the usurpation of human rights by those in official power.

N E A MEETING

AT THE N. E. A. meeting to be held in St. Paul July 4-11, one of the six general sessions will be given to a discussion of "Education in a Democracy." This should be taken as an encouraging sign that even educators are coming to realize that the present evolution is toward democracy, and that we should be doing something in anticipation of the impending changes. Another significant feature of this year's meeting will be the first session of the Department of Classroom Teachers. We are informed that the term "Classroom Teachers" includes the teachers of the entire twelve grades, and that this Department will offer an opportunity for such teachers to discuss educational and professional problems pertaining to them. The first session will be devoted to the report of a committee on Teachers' Salaries and the Cost of Living; the second will discuss the subject of industrial training from the classroom standpoint. This is an encouraging sign that points to the professionalizing of the teachers' calling.

Sometimes teachers overdevelop that much-worn virtue called patience, and waste a lot of valuable time trying to get along with a petulant, pig-headed principal.

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DEMOCRACY IN ADMINISTRATION

THAT EFFICIENT management need not mean "military" management is known to every person who is at all informed on the recent developments and the present tendencies in the field of scientific management. The president of the Board of Education in New York City has acknowledged that suggestions made to the Board by various teachers' organizations have been of great value in improving school work. The recommendation of the School Inquiry Committee that an administrative council of teachers be established (see THE AMERICAN TEACHER, May, 1913) was adopted in a modified form in the establishment of the Teachers' Advisory Council; but even this has already done enough work to show that there is wisdom and understanding outside the minds of the highest school officials. It is possible to extend the principle of democracy in the administration of public affairs and at the same time increase efficiency.

This view receives significant support in an official communication recently sent by Henry Bruère, City Chamberlain and formerly a director of the Bureau of Municipal Research, to Mayor Mitchel of New York. The city employs over 50,000 men and women in the various departments—excluding the Department of Education and the courts. The experience of these workers may increase their respective efficiencies, but it does not regularly contribute to the improved organization of the service, nor to the development of standards. To utilize this experience systematically, Mr. Bruère makes recommendations that will seem very radical to those who are content with what was good enough for their grandfathers. In his letter to the mayor he says:

It is now the practise in well-conducted private corporations to establish coöperative relations with employees. This in my judgment is a very great need of city departments. In many departments, of course, such coöperation exists. As a means, however, of

establishing a general interest in the efficiency of city business, and breaking down unnecessary departmental isolation, I believe that a general employees' committee will be of great value. It would be particularly useful to the Civil Service Commission in working out many of its problems, and it will be of great aid, I am confident, in carrying out your program of efficiency and economy.

It is proposed that a committee of employees of the various departments under the jurisdiction of the Mayor be organized to confer on questions involving employees' efficiency and welfare and the relations between employees and executives. It is hoped by means of this committee to stimulate the interest of employees in the administrative problems of their departments, and to bring forward suggestions and ideas from their experiences and information regarding city business.

In the past, a very serious obstacle to the efficiency of the city government has been the separation of the executive forces and the working forces. This has been due to the frequent change in executives and to a conventional formality in the relationship between the employees and those in charge of departments and bureaus. There is in all this a survival of the old feudal spirit kept alive by the use of titles and by official glorification.

When the formality of the relation of officials to subordinates is overcome and employees come to recognize that the efficiency of the government depends upon their interest and initiative as much as the routine work of the government depends on their effort, there will be brought into play a vast amount of interest and intelligence regarding city problems which are now only spasmodically engaged upon their solution or not at all. The greatest undeveloped resource for city progress lies in the great body of city employees themselves.

Planning and directing forces of the government are continually being re-

cruited from outside the ranks of employees. The result of this practise is that there is a lack of continuity in management and failure to capitalize the enormous benefit of accumulated experience.

This condition can be remedied, it seems to me, in two ways: First, by giving employees a distinct part in the management of the city's affairs directly and openly; and, second, by training employees for promotion to positions of administrative and executive importance. The time should come very soon when practically all of the important executive positions of the city will be filled by the advancement of men and women who enter the service in subordinate positions. This is the secret of efficiency and progress in German city government.

Some time in the not too distant future, let us hope, teachers will also gain an opportunity to participate in the democratic management of their own affairs.

POLITICIANS IN EDUCATION

IF THERE WERE a strong professional spirit among teachers, the announcement of the candidacy of an unfit person for a high educational office would be considered by them a public disgrace. Something would be said out loud.

One of the candidates for the position of associate superintendent of schools in the City of New York has been for years an associate of political marauders, and has not in all that time given any public indication of being able to develop educational ideals, or even to understand those developed by others.

If not politics, what is it, then, that gives strength to unfit candidates?

During the strike of teachers employed by the county authorities, in Herefordshire, England, the National Union of Teachers was prepared to pay the salaries of the striking members for a period of five years, if necessary. "Surely," says the treasurer of a strong union, "if I am with thee, who can stand against thee?"

BOOK NOTES

All books may be ordered from *The American Teacher*

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

VOCATION FOR GIRLS. Prepared by a Committee of Teachers under the Direction of E. W. WEAVER, Director of Vocational Guidance and Industrial Education Bureau of the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce. 16mo. pp. 200. New York: A. S. Barnes Co. 1913. 75 cents net.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE; The Teacher as a Counselor. By J. ADAMS PUFFER, Director of the Beacon Vocation Bureau, Boston. 16mo. pp. 294. illustrated. Chicago: Rand-McNally Co. 1913. \$1 net.

With increasing interest in the fate of our school product, there has been growing a body of literature more or less vaguely classified as "vocational guidance," most of which is a little worse than useless. The book compiled under the direction of Mr. Weaver is an improvement on one of the same title reviewed in these pages last September. There is a recognition of the fact that the employment of young people seriously calls for some degree of social regulation, and the provisions of the labor laws of New York State are printed. There are several preliminary chapters on Self-examination, making the choice, the preparation, counting the cost, estimating the value, finding the opening, changing about, etc., that will no doubt be of assistance to girls who have to look forward to starting in some wage-earning occupation. Thirteen chapters are devoted to descriptions of various lines of work open to girls; there is a reference list after each chapter, with a number of questions for discussion, or practical suggestions for further study; there is a list of technical and trade schools in New York, and an index. The last chapter is a reprint of Ruskin's homily on work needing to be honest, useful and cheerful, from his "Crown of Wild Olives." But in the body of the book there is not a critical attitude toward the various occupations or toward the whole field of woman's work. The writers seem to assume, for example, that "satisfying the employer" is in itself a virtue, or that the ability to sell goods may be detached from the character of the goods to be sold. There

is not evident any criterion other than the prevalent ones of the need for a job, the desirability for high wages, the vulgar tests of success. There is a good selection of approved sentiments about doing your work well, etc., from different authors, but nothing about demanding from work the opportunity for human beings to live.

Mr. Puffer's book is the first in this field that has value for the general reader. There is a discussion of the relation of education to economic processes, and of the need for vocational guidance in view of the industrial revolution and the decline of the apprentice system. The effect of vocational guidance in adjusting the work to the pupil and in utilizing the vocational motive to reinforce the school work is discussed in one chapter, and referred to repeatedly. The effect of vocational guidance upon the adjustment of workers, and upon the modification of our general attitude toward work and position are emphasized. Vocational guidance should lead, for example, to the promotion of workers to positions of responsibility on the basis of demonstrated fitness, and not on the basis of family connections. The equipment of the teacher as vocational counselor, the methods of the counselor a study of different types of occupation for men and for women, for city and for country, for collar and for overalls, etc., precedes a discussion of several groups of occupations.

Mr. Puffer's intimate understanding of the workings of the boy's mind enable him to see in trifles what the ordinary teacher is likely to overlook, and one may not expect to become an expert counselor by reading this book. But one can come to an acquaintance with the problems involved, and with some of the clues to their solution. An excellent first book; but far from being the last book on the subject.

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army.

DYNAMIC VS. STATIC

I have often thought that one's chances for success in the teaching profession are far better, though he wander at first aimlessly about for some time in the realm of methods, materials, devices and ends to be sought, provided he be possessed with high ideals, a longing ambition, great enthusiasm and a strong will to do the best thing within his power for those whom he teaches, than are the chances of that other teacher who does things in a particular way without knowing why; whose subject-matter, methods, materials and devices are identical with those used last year and who does not expect to make any change for the year that is to come. A dynamic, diverse course, though uncertain at first, is almost sure to lead the way of discovery, growth, crystallization into principles and laws of sound pedagogy, while doing "the same old thing in the same old way," is a journey without incident or curiosity; one whose end (to the teacher) is the beginning point and whose highway is the beaten road describing a circle.

—T. J. McCARTHY, County Superintendent, Franklin County, New York, in *The Educator-Journal*, April, 1914.

A prominent member of the Board of Education of New York City has recently complained that teachers never come to the meetings of the Board of Education, except when they want something for their individual selves. He is correct. Why should they do otherwise, when the Board has never expected them to come for any other reason.

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The course of study of our own city, ideal as it would be under ideal conditions of time, of classes and of teachers, is not ideal in its results. Why? Because it asks too much. And it is this striving after the impossible, I believe, that is causing the discouragement, where it exists within the ranks, and the disparagement of our schools so common without.—MARY POLK, "What is the Matter with Our Schools," in *Boston News Letter* for January.

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